

Recommendations for Amputation Rehabilitation – Policy Options and Guidelines

Accessibility

Prosthetic services should be available to all who need it and efforts to ensure access instituted. Transportation to orthopedic centres and accommodation while in therapy must be included in the rehabilitation process. A mechanism whereby local administrators or health workers can refer individuals to the centres as required is needed.

Universality

Services offered must be available for all physically impaired irrelevant of the impairment etiology, disability, sex, age, political or military affiliation. Although landmines have attained global attention, those who have lost limbs to bullets, work accidents, train accidents, and other means, as well as those impaired, disabled or handicapped by any means, are equally deserving and in need of rehabilitation services.

Continuity

An amputation is lifelong; repairs, refitting, replacement of prostheses and aids must be ensured. This requires education of patients who go through the centres on how to access the available resources and services for repairs, new fittings, and difficulties as needed. This may include where appropriate and feasible, the availability of parts and servicing at the community level.

Extension of Services

Counseling and job retraining are important and effective aspects of rehabilitation and should be implemented as resources allow and where such services are appropriate. The continued development of physiotherapy services at community level is important.

Empowerment

Disability support and lobby groups at the local and national level need assistance in developing infrastructure and managerial skills in order to effectively advocate and develop sustainable projects on their own behalf. Efforts should be made to train and employ people with physical disabilities in the ongoing projects that serve the disabled community, so as to serve as role-models and to facilitate the dissemination and accessibility processes.

Dissemination

Information and education regarding the services available and methods of access must be implemented at all levels. This especially concerns the workers at rural health posts who are in a position to identify and advise persons with an impairment of the services available and how those services may be accessed.

Equality

Constitutional rights of the disabled ensuring no discrimination, particularly in the workforce, must be introduced and enforced.

Evaluation

The development of a national data base on target groups is essential to assist those working on the delivery of rehabilitative services in planning their programs. Follow-up of those who receive services should be ongoing when possible, so to ensure the needs of the population are being met and that the services being offered have positive impact individuals lives.